



THORNE BAY BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

BUSINESSES BUILDING A MORE PROSPEROUS THORNE BAY, ALASKA
www.thornebayalaska.net email: tbba@thornebayalaska.net

P.O. Box 19492

Thorne Bay, Alaska 99919

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Local Boundary Commission
550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1770
Anchorage, AK 99501-3510
FAX: 907-269-4539

Dear Members of Local Boundary Commission:

The Thorne Bay Business Association opposes the formation of an Island-wide Borough on Prince of Wales Island. It is our opinion that the Island does not meet the standards set forth by the State of Alaska.

At the time of Thorne Bay's Incorporation, the Corporate limits were extended to 22.5 square miles including rural areas in need of future government services on the advice of the local Boundary Commission. It was considered a model for future incorporations by the LBC as it eliminated the need for another layer of government on the surrounding rural areas.

Economic Capacity of the Region

Ketchikan Pulp Company, the economic engine that drove this Island for fifty years, has departed. Ward Cove packing, our main fish buyer, has shut down due to low fish prices. Thorne Bay's citizens just increased our Sales Tax to 5% and still can't finance our small city on a sustaining basis. The amount of private property on Prince of Wales Island is very small. Most lands are owned by government and Native Corporations exempt from taxation. This includes housing in the four major communities. The property valuations in the study are no longer relative because of the bad economy. It is against these odds that we struggle and now are being asked to support another layer of government that we don't need.

Large and Stable Population

There has been a mass exodus of many of our Island's most productive people in the past three years due to lack of employment opportunities. We don't see a stable population here until a new long-term industry becomes established. The 2000 Census is no longer relative.

Interrelated and Integrated sufficiently to support a Borough Government

Being on the same Island doesn't necessarily make the diverse communities on this island integrated in interrelated. We have the communities of Pt. Baker and Port

Protection that are isolated by choice, the Native Communities that are fiercely independent with their own health systems, land base, hunting and fishing regulations, and local employment only open to natives. The East side communities of Thorne Bay and Coffman Cove were thrust into the Ketchikan election district against their will.

A Borough Government would serve the Broad Public

It is difficult to see how another underfunded level of government will serve the broad public. We see the situation in Ketchikan with all the bickering between the borough and the city; we don't need that here.

POWCAC has been a good start for our Island communities to work together and it is within our means.

The island School Boards are now meeting and planning together.

Rather than spend \$600,000 on another level of government that we don't need, let's forge ahead with POWCAC and work together so as to not use our capital funds to build competing entities, then come up with some enlightened way for the second class cities and unincorporated communities to start providing some monetary support to the school system. Some logical consolidations need to be worked out in the Island school system.


Jim Wilson


President, Thorne Bay Business Association